But the point is that green is the symbol of growth in the church here and out there in the world where everybody can relate to that and Jesus certainly related to it when he talked about spring in a way in his parable today he talked about a seed sprouting or a bud sprouting in this case it's actually a seed that you plant and harvest for food to benefit humanity and your family and if you look at the introduction to the celebrate it says that God's word is like the rain God's word is like the sower and I read that this week and I thought wait a minute that's God's word is not like the rain and the sewer God's word is like the seed and Jesus tells a parable about how the sword takes care of the seed and how the rain helps the seed so I don't know what the person's thinking in the introduction it certainly doesn't match the prayer the day obviously written by a different person because it says there we thank you for planting in us the seed of your word or the seed which is your word you might say in the words of Jesus well I looked in the gospel today and I thought I'm going to find that passage where Jesus himself it says that the seed is the word of God and I read it and I read it and I I went over it like three times frontwards backwards inside out it's not there and I thought well wait a second you see there's four gospel accounts there's four stories about Jesus in the New Testament Matthew mark Luke and John we're reading from Matthew so I read the extended version of the solar and the seed in Matthew and I still did not find Jesus saying the seed is the word of God and I thought what I I'm sure I'm not wrong I too many times I've read it heard it thought about it preached on it and then I thought well wait a second let me look in mark there's a parable the sower version in mark and there's no Jesus saying the seed is the word of God and I thought well it's that parable is not in the gospel of John I knew that from having you know studied it for so many years and I thought wait a minute there's a chance in Luke and Luke because that's the that's the book you know I've often said if you're gonna start reading the Bible somewhere read the book of mark it's the shortest book starts right with the life of Jesus there's not even a Christmas story it's just bang Jesus shows up and everything starts to happen it's very dynamic oh so Luke is different than um mark Luke is much more carefully written or edited by a scholar it's thought and there's a different orientation instead of the drama of Jesus bang doing this Bang Bang bang to keep using the word immediately in the book of mark immediately Jesus said this immediately Jesus did that did this did that did this it's like people were stunned at everything he was doing well Luke was different because the orientation is not so dynamic and instead Luke emphasizes healing Jesus is healing people healing healing healing Jesus is the comforter not the Dynamo but the comforter of the poor and the sick so if you want to get the shortest most dynamic beginning of the story of Jesus you start with mark but if you want to get into Jesus as a healer as a comforter as a peacemaker then you go to the gospel of Luke instead well I went to Luke and sure enough I get the chills just thinking about it I found it and it's Luke chapter 8 verse 11 Jesus says bang the seed is the word of God so this is not put in the other ones and then it's thought that maybe Luke was written after Matthew and the editor said let's clarify this Jesus really was saying that the the the seed is the word of God I think Jesus probably did say it but it wasn't written down in Matthew well the point is that Jesus is saying that the word of God is like a seed that can be tended in many different ways that beautiful part that we just read not going to read it over again but it was something

like some of the seeds fall on on shallow ground or dry ground and they sprout but then they don't take root and they die others they're they're scorched by the sun of others the birds pluck up the seeds because the seeds were put by mistake and a pathway Jesus said you don't plant seeds on a pathway where people are walking you know if you have a big garden you want to have a pathway through the garden you don't want people you know stopping through the garden but then he says some seed falls on good soil and if you understand the word of God as a seed and you take care of it it will magnify for you it will glorify it will in a sense take on a kind of glow because it takes on new meanings and and the new appreciations you gain for it you know it's it's one of the amazing things about the teaching of Jesus he wasn't teaching geometry or chemistry or or mathematics he was like he's a poet and his parables such as the parable today of the sewer every time you read it it means something different you the layers of meaning come through over and over again you appreciate the depth of his parables not just through one reading but through repeated readings maybe not in one day but over a period of years that's why Christianity is really appreciated best when you allow yourself to mature in the word of God and you don't expect everything to be revealed to you the first time you read a passage of scripture but you give it another try it's like church I feel sorry for people who will go to church and say well that's not for me well you know if you go to a service almost any church service I suppose there's some that would have no redeeming feature I kind of doubt it but the point is there should be something for you it might be different for another person but one of your tasks or challenges or opportunities as a person in worship is to find that Jim I I don't want to use needle in a haystack I guess they call it diamond in the rough right or when they pan for gold in the old days oh how much sand they went through day after day after day but once they had a a speckle of shining something glittering in the sun whoa we're on to something and then they they dig deeper and then they even dig a mine because they have found what they might call the mother lode of gold and it's sort of like that with the word of God that's a different analogy but Jesus is using the analogy of a seed how do you take care of the seed or the seeds that are given to you say in worship you can stand back and be critical and say this is not working that's not working that's not working but is there not something I always have told people through the many years I've served congregations is you don't have to go with the the the preacher you don't have to go with the reader you don't have to go with the hymns but you've got scripture there's something that people have been preserving for thousands of years and what it is is very difficult to define if you're talking about a parable but in this case Jesus is talking about a seed the word of God is a seed and I was thinking this week that maybe the best way to understand it and Jesus said you have to understand it for it to multiply and meaning for you 100 fold 60 fold and whatnot what you have to do is make a distinction between the physical seed and the spiritual seed this is one of the first lessons I learned studying the works of Martin Luther of 500 or so years ago he always said as I've repeated many times from this pulpit you have not understood the word of God until you've understood it spiritually you haven't understood a parable until you've understood it spiritually you haven't understood a verse from salms or the proverbs unless you've come to understand it also spiritually so in this case the lesson is to understand it there are two ways to understand the seed Jesus

didn't go in this much detail he might have at the time but they didn't take enough notes to pick it up but the idea is with a good preacher you're going to get an extension of the words of Jesus in such a way that what is said could be an extension of what he originally said it's not something that I'm adding on to Jesus it's something I'm drawing out of what he already said and to understand the seed or the word of God you I think you definitely have to understand it spiritually as well as physically so physically the seed is portrayed repeatedly in our readings today you look at Isaiah the rain comes down and waters the seed and prepares the seed the the day is prepared by the Lord for growing the seed which would be more than just water good soil sunshine depending on what kind of plant it is you want more or less sunshine right people who know their plants know well this one needs a lot of bright sunshine you gotta put this in by the window but this other one you can have at home you don't have to put it right by the window because it doesn't need so much son it's amazing what people know about botany and flowers and plants and seeds I had a friend when I was in my internship in Austin TX he was he had his PhD in botany and he taught at the University of Texas and we'd be driving somewhere he'd have to stop on the roadside and say oh look at these flowers look at these wildflowers by the side of the road this is the this that by the Bing but a being the Latin name is this the Latin of this the color of this this is the type of seed it is and he had all this in his head because he had to pass all these PhD exams and I don't know if I would have the discipline for studying botany like that but it was a marvel to to listen to him like it's a marvel to listen to anybody talk about something in great detail that they have mastered a mastery of their subject oh I meant to check Wimbledon today and see if Roger Federer is still mastering his tennis you know he's been playing he's been winning these things for 15 or 20 years he's a father of four I don't know how he's he's doing it but he's definitely got a sense of humor his wife is very supportive but it's a marvel to watch him play or to hear him talk it's gonna be great when he writes a book and a lot of the tennis players a lot of sports people write books some of them are sort of junk but some of them have a lot of detail they're very very interesting well one of the things we have to learn is not everything a botanist knows but just the difference between the spiritual seed and the physical seed and the the physical word the literal word and the spiritual word and again Isaiah talks about the physical seed you have to prepare it God is the one who prepares the physical seed and then Jesus talks about how you have to prepare the physical seeds in the right way to get a good harvest you know my first church I was in the middle of of bean fields and corn fields and the work that these farmers put in to planting and harvesting it was just astounding to me I learned so much I won't go into things like milking and raising hogs and stuff but just the the planting of the seed in the ground one of the things that always amazed me was how they had to time the planting just right because they needed dry enough ground so they could till it up but not too dry so it's too hard to till up and they couldn't till up mud and sometimes they'd have tons of rain all April long and they have to wait and wait and wait and wait and wait to plant the seed and they were nervous wrecks some of them and when when it was raining constantly in the month of April ironically there's Easter there but the the farmers would be depressed sometimes because they didn't get the rain to let up and they would be in church very unhappy they're happy when the rains in the spring stop so they can get out and plant all of their

seeds then they're not there I won't see them at church for like 6 weeks because they're having a ball out there making a living then tending the land so in the spring they're waiting for the rains to stop so they can plant then in the fall they have to harvest at the right time as well and that again cannot be done if things are too wet if you get a lot of fall rain that's a big problem because the corn and the beans can rot on the vine and they can be rotting on the vine because of too much fall rain and they can't get out and harvest it because the tractors will get stuck in the mud so they have to wait and there can be a window of just a couple three days when everything dries out then they get out there and they go 24 hours a day and they harvest what they have planted So much depends on timing and of course they have to use good soil and good fertilizer I remember the first time I woke up in my first congregation out in the country I woke up to the smell of manure and it was really overwhelming and I looked out and sure they there they were with manure spreaders where was her like little helicopters with throwing manure all over the field and they're doing a 500 to 1000 acres of manure spreading around all four corners of my Parsonage their Parsonage and I remember I thought I I'm not going to stay in the office today I'm going into town and you know go to the gym or something and got home that night didn't help you just have to endure the smell until things dry out and the wet manure dries out and everything is OK then but they have to plant and tend the physical seed in a very careful way in order for them to get a product and they get not just 100 fold they get 1000 fold with new farming methods than they used to have but you know what this is where the breakdown of the seed analogy comes and why you have to bring in the spiritual seed because the physical seed dies the physical seed is destroyed the physical seed will disappear but you have to turn then to the spiritual seed within as Saint Paul says the the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies your physical bodies through his spirit that dwells in you science can look for it all they want but they're probably not gonna find the spirit they're going to find a physical component of the spirit but what's the point the final most important point about the difference between the spiritual seed and the physical seed or the worldly seed and the heavenly seed the difference is this the physical seed requires all manner of tending and care for us to get a good product from it but then there is a temporary feature of the physical seed it doesn't last forever you eat a piece of toast this morning it's gone but the heavenly seed is what brings salvation the the spiritual seed you might say within the physical seed which is you the spirit within the mortal body and here is another very big difference the physical seed again will be destroyed one way or another if there's a harvest we'll lead the harvest and it'll be lost that way but the heavenly seed is never destroyed the heavenly seed within you is that part of you eternal and ultimately infinite although when you're in a body in the world you may not see it so clearly remember Paul said now we see dimly through a glass darkly but then we shall see clearly face to face we see the full reality of God we shed the physical seed and the heavenly seed that is you will remain and here's a last difference that's very important with the physical seed you have to tend it with the spoken word getting something out of worship getting something out of what somebody says getting something out of the word of God you have to work at that and you have to have good understanding for the seed to produce multiple times of itself but when it comes to the heavenly seed the spiritual

seed you cannot tend that the heavenly seed the spiritual seed is the gift from God which you have and which you haven't fully yet realized and you will more fully realize in the future so that the physical seed is a seed that we tend in the world the flower seed you tend that flower in the world but the heavenly seed seek it yes but for the heavenly seed to come to fruition God is the one who tends the spiritual seed because there will come a time when you can't tend anything your days of tending are over your days of farming are over days of walking are over days of planting are over days of harvesting are over but the spiritual seed within you the spirit of God which is in your mortal bodies will remain and will be the portal the pathway to eternal life and all the glories and the treasures of Christ in heaven God will tend to your spiritual seed oh man